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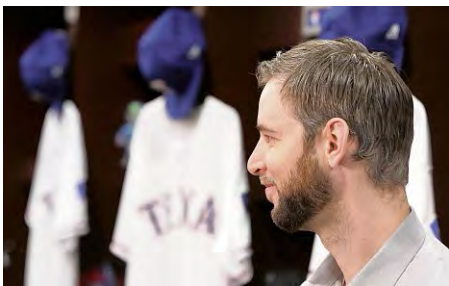
COWBOYS

Running game better than expected without Ezekiel Elliott 1B



RANGERS

Chris Martin's inspirational story keeps getting better 1B



Cold front might deliver a Christmas miracle

BY BILL HANNA
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One of the most elusive of Christmas presents for North Texans is snow, but forecasters say there's a chance this holiday season — and a chance is better than nothing.

"What we can say is we can't rule it out at this point," said National Weather Service meteorologist Ted Ryan. "We still think there's a greater likelihood of a cold and dry Christmas, but

the models are saying there's a 15 to 20 percent chance of a winter storm, and that's a pretty high number for 10 days out."

For any given year, the odds are about 3 to 4 percent for snow on Christmas. The last White Christmas in the DFW area came in 2012.

Because the forecast models keep changing every time they're run, there's no clear consensus this far out, said Ryan, who works in the NWS Fort Worth office.

What needs to happen for

snow?

An upper-level storm system needs to park over Las Vegas and pump moisture into Texas. If the storm system moves through quickly or drifts back over the Pacific Ocean, then North Texas won't see any snow — or sleet or freezing rain, either.

What forecasters do know is a strong cold front will move into the DFW area, most likely on Thursday, with low temperatures dropping below freezing.

For now, Ryan said "don't

Snow around Christmas since 2000

- **Dec. 25, 2012.** Four to 6 inches fell across parts of Collin, Denton and Parker counties.
- **Dec. 24, 2009** Rare blizzard conditions hit areas northwest of Fort Worth with 9 inches of snow reported from Jacksboro to Bowie. At Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, 3 inches of snow were recorded.
- **Dec. 22, 2004** Up to 2 inches of snow fell across North Texas, with 4 inches reported near Stephenville and east of Sherman-Denison.
- **Dec. 24, 2002** Flurries fell across North Texas on Christmas Eve, with most of the DFW area reporting light snow.

freak out," but do pay attention to the weather forecast.

"I would say anybody with travel plans, whether by plane or car, probably should keep an eye on the forecast and check back early next week," Ryan said. "If it does turn out to be a winter storm, people may need

to look at changing their plans and leaving a day early."

There have been 24 Christmas winter weather events in North Texas since 1841, according to the National Weather Service.

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SCHOOLS

Cat statues and tequila

Students' holiday gifts to teachers run gamut from practical to wacky



Kindergarten teacher Traci Cowan unwraps a gift mug from the PTA during a holiday bake shop at Hidden Lakes Elementary in Keller.

With Rubio, Corker on board, tax plan heads for approval

BY JIM TANKERSLEY
AND THOMAS KAPLAN
New York Times

WASHINGTON

Republican lawmakers Friday secured enough votes to pass the most sweeping tax overhaul in decades, putting them on the cusp of their first significant legislative victory as party leaders geared up to pass a \$1.5 trillion tax cut along party lines and send it to President Donald Trump by Christmas.

A day after the bill's fate seemed somewhat in doubt, Republican leaders notched two wins Friday, when Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said he would vote yes after winning a more generous child tax credit in the final

SEE TAX PLAN, 2A

LOCAL & TEXAS ALLEGATIONS OF DIRTY POLITICS

Three North Texas law enforcement groups take a Fort Worth businessman to task for an anonymous Facebook page. 4A



Taunja Balkcom, a first-grade teacher at Hidden Lakes Elementary, shows off a charm bracelet she got from students 10 years ago.

BY SANDRA ENGELLAND
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As long as there has been Christmas and schools, teachers — especially those in elementary schools — have been receiving gifts from their students.

Students will often huddle around the desks of their teachers when they unwrap the gifts, whether a fresh-baked loaf of banana-nut bread, a knitted scarf from a child's mother or gift card.

Jimmie Johnson, who taught 28 years in the Fort Worth and Hurst-Euless-Bedford school districts, said she stores many of her holiday memories, in-

cluding "tons" of ornaments and unique presents that youngsters made for her, in a box.

"The gifts that are made by my students are the most memorable," she said.

About 20 years ago, a little girl had her grandmother teach her to sew and made Johnson a drawstring jewelry pouch.

"As I remember it was wrapped in a piece of notebook paper," she said. Another year she received a Mexican coin from a student. The coin came with a message: "If you ever go to Mexico here."

Johnson said the gifts were important to her students — many of whom came from

SEE GIFTS, 6A



THE GARDEN GURU NO HOLIDAY FROM WINTER CHORES

Transplanting, pruning, raking and even planting are on the early winter calendar of gardening chores. 1C

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